#2618

Heather Colgan
Tracy Fullerton
P.O. Box 369 Watt Road
Claridge, PA 15623

December 5, 2007

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
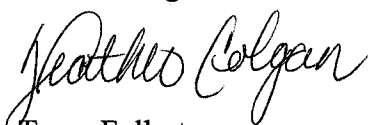Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

      We are writing in regards to the November 16, 2007 PSEA newsletter focusing on Chapter 14, Special Education Regulations. As Speech Therapists in the public school setting, we support decreasing caseload numbers for several reasons. Decreasing caseload numbers would allow for more individual therapy time per student. This would allow speech therapists an opportunity to plan more effective, efficient and quality lessons.   With the current demands of documentation to fulfill IDEA requirements, additional time is needed in our daily schedules to complete these tasks. As students are referred for speech therapy, a major complaint of the evaluation process is the intervention time that is lost due to the time needed to complete report writing. Again, with more time to complete paperwork, therapy can be initiated sooner. A smaller caseload would also allow for additional time to utilize an inclusion model while collaborating with regular education teachers to meet Pennsylvania standards.

      Even with a reduction in caseload, the need for speech therapy in the school setting will not lessen. An attempt should be made to establish a more specific, standardized eligibility criteria so guidelines can be met for all Pennsylvania schools. A decrease in caseload numbers should not have a negative impact on the availability of services for students. Appropriate school personnel should also be increased to allow a better opportunity to meet students' individual needs.

      As many concerns have surfaced among speech therapists in the school setting, this is an attempt to summarize the positive effects of decreasing student caseload without negatively impacting the service delivery.

Sincerely,

Heather Colgan

Tracy Fullerton